

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-04 USSS-00 SCCT-02 OMB-01 NIC-01

SAJ-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OPR-02

DRC-01 /112 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4563

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5923

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IT, PINS

SUBJECT: KIDNAPPERS OF PUBLIC OFFICIAL HINT AT DEAL FOR RELEASE

"POLITICAL PRISONERS"

REF: ROME 5659

1. APRIL 26 COMMUNICATION FROM "RED BRIGADES", LEFTIST TERRORIST GROUP THAT CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY FOR SOSSI ABDUCTION, ASSERTED THAT SOSSI WAS "POLITICAL PRISONER OF PROLETARIAT" WHO WOULD NOT BE RELEASED GRATIS. LETTER POSED NO SPECIFIC PROPOSALS, BUT IS FEARED TO FORESHADOW DEMAND FOR RELEASE OF MEMBERS OF LEFTIST "OCTOBER 22" GROUP SENTENCED EARLIER THIS YEAR FOR ROBBERY AND MURDER AS RESULT OF SOSSI'S INVESTIGATION. IMMEDIATE POLICE RESPONSE WAS REMOUNTING AND REINTENSIFICATION OF POLICE EFFORTS WHICH HAD BEEN SUSPENDED FOLLOWING EARLIER RECEIPT OF LETTER WRITTEN BY SOSSI ASKING THAT SEARCH BE STOPPED. 4,000 POLICE ARE NOW COMBING CENTRAL GENOA HOUSE-TO-HOUSE ON ASSUMPTION ROAD BLOCKS HAVE PREVENTED KIDNAPPERS FROM TRANSFERRING VICTIM OUT OF CITY.

2. COMMENT: ASSUMING FAILURE OF POLICE EFFORTS TO LOCATE AND LIBERATE SOSSI, AUTHORITIES MAY HAVE TO FACE DIFFICULT DECISION WHETHER OR NOT TO MAKE DEAL WITH KIDNAPPERS. SUCH DECISION WOULD INVOLVE BALANCING OF HUMANITARIAN CONCERN FOR SOSSI AGAINST
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DANGEROUS PRECEDENT OF GOVERNMENT CAPITULATION TO DOMESTIC

TERRORISTS. IT IS UNCERTAIN HOW COALITION PARTNERS WOULD APPROACH SUCH EVENTUALITY AND WHETHER THEIR POSITIONS WOULD BE UNIFIED OR DIVERGENT. REPORTEDLY, JUDGE HAVING JURISDICTION OVER "OCTOBER 22" OFFENDERS (WHOSE APPEAL IS STILL PENDING) HAS AUTHORITY TO GRANT THEM "PROVISIONAL LIBERTY", A POSSIBLY CONVENIENT SOLUTION SHOULD GOVERNMENT ULTIMATELY AGREE TO AN EXCHANGE. VOLPE

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